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Media release

Tourism businesses see sustainability as top priority

2019 has been a transitional year for the tourism industry, with a move into a slower phase of the business cycle and a clear industry commitment to sustainability.

The information comes from the annual *State of the Industry* report for 2019, which has been prepared by WelTec for Tourism Industry Aotearoa from a survey completed by 484 industry members.

While the growth of visitor arrivals and spending has slowed in 2019 after an extended and strong growth period, the confidence of tourism businesses remains high, especially when compared to the wider economy. 43% of respondents expect their business situation to improve over the next 12 months. In recent surveys of the wider business community, this number is typically below 10%.

“This optimism is encouraging,” says TIA Chief Executive Chris Roberts. “With solid confidence levels we are well positioned to continue investing in the things that will improve industry performance and deliver for our visitors and communities.”

In response to the question ‘What can advance my business?’ the highest-ranking areas were: improving the visitor experience; increased international connectivity and attracting high value visitors; a stronger focus on sustainability; and engagement with local communities.

“These are all elements that are embedded in the *Tourism 2025 & Beyond - A Sustainable Growth Framework* and operationalised in TIA’s Tourism Sustainability Commitment,” says Mr Roberts.

Throughout the report some strong messages emerged from respondents, including:

- 84% support sustainable supply chains
- 83% agree that staffing is a significant issue for the tourism industry
- 83% agree that infrastructure projects require more government funding
- 79% are showcasing the benefits of tourism to their local communities
- 78% are identifying ways to enhance or restore the natural environment

TOURISM INDUSTRY AOTEAROA

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- 78% agree that domestic visitors are important for their business
- 78% are actively working to reduce their environmental footprint

On sustainability, the key message was that while 78% of respondents were signed up to the Tourism Sustainability Commitment, only 36% of respondent felt that New Zealand tourism businesses were doing enough in terms of sustainability.

“Clearly, there is an appetite for meaningful and change-making commitments to sustainability, and TIA will be vigorously acting on this over the year ahead.”

One area of concern was the results exploring the industry’s relationship with Government, with the key theme being around compliance requirements and costs (such as fees, rates, levies, work visas, etc.) at both Local and Central Government levels.

“TIA will continue to press for cost effective and responsive public services in our discussions with Government,” said Mr Roberts.

“Every part of the business cycle has its unique challenges. Through research such as this, we can get a good handle on where we are, which is invaluable in ensuring we are addressing the right issues at the right time.”

Read the State of the Industry 2019 report [here](#).

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KEY FACTS

- Tourism in New Zealand is a \$107 million per day industry. Tourism delivers around \$44 million in foreign exchange to the New Zealand economy each day of the year. Domestic tourism contributes another \$63 million in economic activity every day.
- Tourism is New Zealand’s biggest export earner, contributing \$16.2 billion or 20.6% of New Zealand’s foreign exchange earnings (year ended March 2018).
- 13.5% of the total number of people employed in New Zealand work directly or indirectly in tourism. That means 365,316 people are working in the visitor economy.
- The [Tourism 2025 & Beyond](#) sustainable growth framework/Kaupapa Whakapakari Tāpoi has a vision of growing a sustainable tourism industry that benefits New Zealanders.

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